

279 3
AN ADDRESS

TO THE

TRUSTEES AND GOVERNORS

OF THE

WARNEFORD LUNATIC ASYLUM

AND TO THE

GENTRY INTERESTED IN THE DISTRIBUTION

OF THE

WARNEFORD GIFTS;

in aid of the Insane Poor of respectable and educated life, from whatever
County recommended.

By William Ley M D C S

1856

OXFORD: PRINTED BY SLATTER & ROSE, HIGH STREET.

The recent donations of the late Rev Dr. Warneford to the Asylum which bears his name on the Headington Hill, near Oxford, are as yet unappropriated. They are said to be of the value of £70,000, or upwards. The scheme for their appropriation if formed is unpublished. A revised charter with regulations for the management of the Asylum is talked of ; or may be said to be in one of the stages preliminary to being talked of. It has been written, not confirmed, revised, and treated with total neglect by the Governors, who, being summoned to a special meeting to consider of its revised state, did not assemble nine members to form a quorum.

It has been objected to me that, having subscribed to the Asylum and my name being on the list of Governors, I did not attend ; although, I not only received the special summons, but was asked as a favor to attend. At that time I had no special duty as a Governor. I had duties as the Superintendent of the County Asylum, which made it most expedient that I should not show a desire to be active in the affairs of an institution of a similar character. Since that time the absence of the other Governors ; the charge of indifference laid to my absence ; and the probability that the unwillingness of the Governors to meet the very urgent question, then to have been submitted to them, arose from the feeling that they were Clergy in the discharge of Parochial duties, Professors engaged in Literary Pursuits, or Heads of Colleges engaged in the management of Institutions of totally different character, or Gentlemen engaged in their own business, and were unprepared to add to their vocations that of the organization and management of a Lunatic Asylum ; such considerations as these have suggested to me that the experience gained in one institution does not absolve a Governor from the duty of using it for the benefit of another.

Not having paid any attention to the proceedings of the Warneford Asylum I may not speak with perfect accuracy of

matters relating to that Institution. My purpose is not to prove myself conversant with the affairs of my neighbour, but to advance the question of what will be in future useful; and to offer some information, which, being unnecessary to those of my class, may be convenient to the Governors who are as yet new to the subject, and may assist in adding to their number gentlemen, from amongst whom future Committees may be formed.

The County Asylums are, in the main, governed by the provisions of an Act of Parliament. The principles of their government are applicable to other public Asylums conducted for charitable purposes; they are less adapted for the class of Asylums which are termed 'Private Asylums.'

The County Asylum is built and in the first instance furnished from the County funds; from those funds it is also repaired, improved, insured, free-rated, free-taxed, and in some degree endowed. The patients and the resident officers and servants are kept by a maintenance rate paid by the parishes on a charge made of the weekly cost of each patient.

In 1848	{ the average number of Patients being }	200	{ the weekly cost per head was }	9s. 8d., Bread being 5½d. per 4lb
1849	270	.....	9s. 5¼d., 4¾d. „
1850	315	.....	8s. 2½d., 4½d. „
1851	343	.....	7s. 6d., 4¼d. „
1852	367	.....	7s. 6½d., 4½d. „
1853	382	.....	8s. 9d., 5½d. „
1854	402	.....	9s. 9½d., 7½d. „
1855	416	.....	10s. 4d., 7¾d. „

Being at a little less than an average cost of 9s. per patient per week. Thus—Salaries and wages, 1s. 8d.; necessaries for warming, lighting, and washing, &c., 1s. 3¾d.; provisions 4s. 2½d.; medicines, 1½d.; clothing, 7¼d.; furniture and repairs, 7½d.; miscellanies, 4½d.

Previously to the number of patients being so great as to divide the cost of the establishment over many heads, the expense in salaries, wages, provisions, and necessaries for the House was felt to be heavy; so that the number of patients being subsequently nearly doubled, the cost to each for salaries and wages was reduced about one third. The proportion of sane persons resident to the insane is about 1 to 10—of attendants to the insane 1 to 15.

The County Asylum is built for paupers, actually in the receipt of parish relief, only. It will be easily seen that a great hardship is imposed upon the poor ratepayer by that condition. The fact of his paying a rate in its support appears to be a reason why he should not receive its benefits, when he is reduced to pauperism then he becomes admissible to its wards.

The recent Act of Parliament attempts to meet this difficulty by a permissive clause which indicates the spirit of future legislation. It permits that when any County Pauper Lunatic Asylum can accommodate more than the pauper lunatics of the County, the visitors may admit other lunatics who may be proper objects, provided that such lunatics, not being pauper, shall have the same accommodation in all respects as the pauper lunatics. The Asylum will find lodging, and they will be themselves allowed to repay to their parishes (which is the security to the Asylum,) the amount charged to the Unions for their share of the maintenance. I have met with Clergymen and Surgeons as Patients in County Asylums, and it does not occur to me to have heard otherwise than satisfaction with their fare, attendance, and treatment. Visitors are accustomed to remark on the full sufficiency of the accommodation for a respectable class. The moral treatment as it is termed, being for the elevation of every character, and the depression of none, (which is the first essential of Committee management,) is only good as it is equal to all who are equally afflicted.

It is true that the continued increase in the number of pauper lunatics in the Asylum does not afford a hope of such excess of room, as a direct consequence of its increased size. The necessity of the case will, however, force the consideration of the remedy. The voice of the rate-payers will suggest that better arrangements in the Union Infirmaries may make them more effective for the relief of all urgent illness in the earliest stages, and thereby check the accumulation of these heavier calamities of chronic disease. The wards of the County Asylums being relieved by the increased and better provided Infirmaries (no longer called "workhouse," or made to bear its repulsive attributes,) the poor ratepayer may hope when

insanity overtakes him, that the rate-supported County Asylum (not then stigmatised as Pauper) will afford him that hospital accommodation which is impossible at his own home.

The patient sent to the County Asylum with the legal order, prescribed by the Act of Parliament, is immediately admitted. He is provided with warm and clean bedding, and subsequently with clothing, with medical care and attendance, nourishing diet, occupation and exercise. The Rev. Vaughan Thomas remarks in his notice of a visit to the Asylum, "Warm air introduced into the bed-rooms of patients who will not keep in bed, makes these habits harmless." I am, myself, strongly impressed with the advantage of the continuous diffusion of warm and fresh air at an equalized temperature.

The Warneford Asylum is a charitable Institution, built by subscriptions, opened in 1826, now needing repair, and supported by the payments of its Lunatic Inmates,—in some cases their own payments, in other cases assisted by a 'Fund in aid'—the proceeds of a subscription list maintained for the purpose; the subscribers to it of £2 2s. annually being recognized as Governors. (It has been proposed to take £1 1s. The rule is non-existent, having died with the not-confirmed regulations.) The classification of patients is that "above the condition of chargeable poor," "poor patients from respectable and educated life," "from whatever county recommended."

The distinction between the two classes of persons for whom the two Asylums are respectively provided is very clear, but the distinction that ought to be maintained in the accommodations and systems of management is not clear. Afflicted and degraded humanity is in both cases the object of relief: the condition the same; the creature comforts and necessities the same. The great distinction being, that different previous habits, associations, and sympathies, have begotten different wants. It may be said that the one class has been taught to give obedience, the other to receive it. It has been thought that, the afflictions being the same, the Committees of management may be conveniently associated, and may to the great advancement of charity and Christian feeling, promote the welfare of both classes under one system of government.

The scheme for the future government and management of the Warneford Asylum has recently died from the inanition of the Governors, a body of about 40 Noblemen, Gentlemen, Ladies, and Colleges or Firms. The ordinary deductions being made, the real list of Governors available for the purposes of a General Meeting may be of as many as 20 persons, of whom 17 are on the list of the Committee and Officers, and of whom one half are engaged as Dignitaries of the University. The revised scheme of the Rules and Regulations for the management of the Lunatic Asylum, died, because, at a special meeting summoned for their confirmation, nine Governors could not be collected to form a quorum. It has been long reported and believed that the charity has not wanted money. Gentlemen have been better pleased to pay their subscriptions to charities for which they were more needed. This Institution has the greater need of Governors of station and business habits to uphold its efficiency.

I am told, on sufficient authority for my statement, that the donations of the late Rev. Dr. S. Warneford, now in the hands of the Board of Trustees appointed by him, are of the value of £70,000. The invested capital in the hands of the Trustees of the Asylum is nearly £6,000. The annual receipts from the friends of patients for their maintenance are about £1,700. Consequent on the failure of the scheme for the government of the Asylum, an appeal is made to the country gentlemen (many of whom are engaged as visitors in the County Asylums, and are by position capable of giving stability to the Institution) in the words of a letter from the late Rev. Dr. Warneford, dated, February 3rd, 1852. "It would give me great satisfaction to obtain the aid and support of the country gentlemen mentioned in your letter," and as expressed by his friend : "I consider it of the utmost importance to the stability and well-being, and the maintenance of Dr. Warneford's principles and purposes to have the aid and support of the country gentlemen." It need scarcely be said that, under the circumstances, it becomes a duty of the whole class of educated society to do honor to the memory of so munificent a donor to the lost-minded of its order. We, however, know that society does not shew its gratitude by

such massive demonstrations ; it leaves the management of such matters to the leading heads, and to the sympathies of those who are more especially affected. When the occasion comes, it is generally considered that its master will shelter himself. It is well that the business of life will sometimes wait while its necessities develop themselves.

The reason is not manifest why the Warneford Asylum should long wait for Rules and Regulations for its management or for a society of Governors of station and character to assist the Committee and the Trustees of the Warneford funds, in the use of those funds for the furtherance of the benevolent designs of the benefactor.

The question of the management of lunacy is not new ; the subject has passed through recent and sifting Parliamentary enquiry ; and the number of the Magistrates and Gentry who have taken part in the administration of the affairs of lunacy is considerable in every county.

The worthy donor of these funds gratified himself with the thought that, by his means, the Asylum, which was considered to be adapted for 50 patients, might be enlarged so as to accommodate 80. He had been long acquainted with the difficulties which the Headington Asylum had to encounter. He had known it for about 30 years. An era had gone through its course while he was advancing in years and his avocations had prevented him from following its course. If he had been satisfied with limiting his charity to a small district, the small number specified would have been amply provided for ; but his charity is for a wide-spread class,—for those who may be recommended from any county. The number which seemed large in his mind, would be so small as to be swallowed up by the district in which the Asylum is situated ; and would involve a waste of the wealth from which others might well claim to derive benefit. The principle which the Trustees ought to assume is, that the benefits of this charity shall be extended to the greatest number, to whom it can be administered with efficiency. It is the duty of those Gentlemen not to act with precipitancy, but rather to call for the aid of the Gentry and middle classes in the making effective, a munificently endowed Hospital and Asylum ; not to

cripple or expend the means, and subject themselves to adverse criticism, when it is too late to receive advantage.

The question immediately occurs, what is the detail of expenditure most desirable for their notice. The example of the County Asylums suggests that a strong and adequate building is the first requisite ; and if that example is sufficient indication of the relation of the expense incurred, to the accommodation provided, an Asylum for 300 patients might be built and furnished by the Warneford funds. It is not expedient to assume the example of the County Asylum, as sufficient without much greater consideration. The County Asylum has resources on which it can fall back for the repairs and improvement of the building, insuring, taxing, &c. The Rev. Gentleman has provided for the endowment of a Chaplain. The powers of the visitors of the County Asylums extend to the pensioning of old servants. There are many specialties regarding an Asylum for the insane of the class of the Gentry that are less to be thought of in a County Asylum. The condition of the Lady, who may superintend the charge of the Ladies confided to her, might need a special consideration for an endowment.

I repeat the opinion that the outlay of the endowment funds should be for the benefit of the greatest number that can be efficiently relieved ; and that the maintenance of the patient should rest on the uniform charge of £1 1s. per week ; with the proviso, that admission to the Asylum should be immediate on the presentation of the proper Parliamentary order ; security being appended for the payment quarterly, of the maintenance charge, and for the removal, if required, of the patient ; and that the subscription to the general purposes of the Asylum, and to the "fund in aid" of the maintenance charge for poor Gentry, should be the admission fee to the Governorship, and to the right of voting at General Meetings

The questions present themselves of who are the Insane ? What are their numbers ? What other charities or establishments are there for their reception ?

The County and Borough Asylums which were built with the intention of receiving private patients, and have doubtful

accommodation for them, are in Cornwall, Gloucester, Leicester, Nottingham, Northampton, Birmingham, Hull, Bristol and Haverford West. The number of patients in them are scattered through other County Asylums are about 350. The Hospitals or Asylums of the description of the Warneford Asylum are, Bethlem, St. Luke's, Haslar and Yarmouth Coton Hill near Stafford, Lincoln, Cheadle near Manchester, Liverpool, York, the Retreat at York, Exeter, Norwich, Guy Hospital, and the Idiot Asylums at Reigate and Colchester. They contain about 1,600 insane inmates. The License Houses which are fitted up for the reception of private patients in London and the country contain about 2,750 ; total, 4,700 now in confinement in England. Of the number still living with their families, or living with persons to whom they are entrusted—not being licensed persons—nothing is known in this country.

In the State of Massachusetts a singular enquiry has been conducted by Dr. Edward Jarvis, a gentleman of independent fortune, acting under the authority of the Council of the Commonwealth. He corresponded with all practitioners of medicine in the State, and if the replies were not satisfactory he communicated with the Clergy, the Overseers of the poor and municipal authorities ; by their returns he collected the names and addresses of all the Lunatics and Idiots within the State. He considers it, however, unfortunate that the period through which the enquiry happened to be conducted was unhealthy. He took great pains to correct the possibility of repetitions of the same name. The report is received as accurate by the Government of the State, and an Act is passed by the Legislature voting 150,000 dollars for the erection of a Hospital for the care and cure of the insane, which shall accommodate 200 or 250 patients. The result of the enquiry as regards the number of Idiots and Lunatics in the State is that, " There is one Lunatic among every 427, and one Idiot among every 1,034, and one of either of these classes among every 302 of the people of Massachusetts." " The native Insane were one in 445 of the total native population, and the foreign Insane were one in 368 of the whole number of aliens in the State." The proportion of Lunatics and Idiots now in

the County Asylum at Littlemore is about one in 735 of the population of the Counties and Boroughs in the Union.

The number of Lunatics amongst the poor is much greater than amongst the more prosperous classes. The natural tendency of the condition is to beget pauperism. The world not wishing to be informed of what is revolting, is diverted at the legal reports of trials involving insanity; and is best pleased with the most distant acquaintance with a guest liable to visit all, and which has been associated with all the horrors of what is dreadful in any age. This age, however, boasts to have mastered its worst features. The Warneford Asylum asks support in assuming its fitting position, and in arrangements for its administering at a low cost, what is grievously and heavily costed to unassisted persons. Insanity is a condition incident to all,—most expensive, and too durable. It is ordinarily rapidly fatal or recoverable from. It is so commonly a condition from which the patient recovers that, it is first regarded as a sickness, with hope; as that feeling wears out, the distressing symptoms force the recognition of its more dreaded name, and its association with length of time. The history of lunacy, as it has shewed itself at the Littlemore Asylum, is generally as of tangible disease. Children or infants in the earliest stages of life, are liable to conditions of disease which obstruct the circulation of the blood, and check the nutrition, and developement of the organization depending on it. Accident determines the position of the obstruction and its consequence. The effect may be for the remainder of life. It may be the dwindling of a limb, or it may be the wasting or non-developement of the brain, inducing idiocy. The same character of affection at more advanced ages causes lunacy.

It is in the nature of things, that if the harder body presses on the softer, the latter yields; if it happens to be a fluid current in a flexible tube, the harder body will check or stop the current of fluid in that tube, and will retard the current to distances—the greater as time occasions accumulation. The lung being, from various causes, liable to imperfect collapse, inducing hardness; it is also liable to be, under the depressing force of the chest in expiration, a fulcrum

pressing on the large vein descending through the cavity of the chest from the head. According as the condition of the lung is more or less permanently hard, the obstruction to the return of blood from the head is great. If the effluent current of blood be checked, the influx of arterial blood is necessarily prevented in the degree proportioned to the check of the venous current. The bony structure of the head and spine, being occupied by the brain, its fluids, membranes and appendages ; it cannot receive two quantities of blood at the same moment of time ; it receives a quantity of arterial blood in a current equal to the efflux of the venous current ; the latter being checked, the former responds to its pressure. The question of the nutrition of the brain, therefore, depends on the quality of blood it contains, and its own activity or waste. Poverty may be co-existent with great power in retaining life, but it needs the most constant and equal circulation to maintain the nutrition of the various organs of the body. The reflux from the head being checked, the other organs of the body derive the greater share of nutriment supplied. Anxiety or mental exertion exhausting the nutrition of the retarded blood are self-exhausting. There is no law to equalise the distribution of deranged circulation. There is no law to equalise mental power when the nutrition of the brain is but partially maintained. The loss of equal power is loss of balance. It is a debility varying and inconstant, momentary or more lasting. Time, amount of disease, quality of blood, and excess of energy or anxiety exhausting the nervous power of the brain determine the intensity and duration of Insanity. It is a disease of atrophy of the nervous centres, produced by such causes. To say such causes, from its being equally manifest that an irregular inflowing current must have as decided an effect as an irregular effluent current. The excited arterial action produces a too rapid current ; its greater force or pressure for influx occasions an unnaturally rapid efflux through unobstructed vessels, and the excess of arterial circulation becomes disease. The pressure which forces efflux is exerted through the substance of the brain ; persistent pressure begets an increased size in the vessel deteriorating the nutritive system, and leaving, when the paroxysm is exhausted, a weakened and damaged organ. I

her case it is now well recognised that what was once called inflammation of the brain, is the reverse condition. The erect and almost constant tendency of Insanity is towards paralysis, loss of mind, consciousness, and power of self-resistance or control. The most violent mania is the most rapid wasting of the brain; without violent exertion or exhaustion the condition may be long quiescent.

The treatment must vary. The quiescent Lunatic, may to advantage, have much time occupied. He needs a diet varied, cherishing, and often stimulant. In the paralytic stage, the amount of care to ensure dryness and cleanliness is greater than is witnessed elsewhere than in a Lunatic Asylum, may happen to others, to see at times extreme cases in rapid progress. The familiar expression of the Nurses' 'rot alive', shows that they have at least a tradition of the character of the disease, which ought now to be only existent in those hospitals, for the most violent and the most chronic of diseases, called Asylums for the Insane. A healthy mind holds but a settled tenure of an unhealthy body, and it will be well when the public have forgotten the prejudices which assign to Lunacy the imputation of vice.

I have not refrained from touching on a professional matter to a non-professional public, because it is to advanced opinion that I address myself; it is for an improved construction; it is in support of a class of treatment which all now approve, and which I hope to see applied for the benefit of the educated classes when their sickness of body, involving great depreciation of mind, asks for such care. I hope to see in the immediate neighbourhood of Oxford, a "Hospital and Asylum" suitable to the afflicted, who have been educated at the University, or who having been brought up in homes of comfort may there seek recovery, or the avoidance of degradation. Funds sufficient for a suitable building are in the hands of the Warneford Trustees; the obtaining it by a maintenance charge will be a privilege to the class who needs its benefits. The amount of the charge is the line of demarcation between the Warneford and the County Asylums; the "fund in aid" is the key to the door of the committee room, where the affairs of the charity must be

managed, and the abatements may be made in those special cases in which the subscribers interest themselves.

This address will be placed in the hands of Gentlemen, who are not immediately acquainted with Oxford and the Warneford Asylum; and it will be convenient to them that I should append to it the names of the principal Officers of the Asylum. The reasons which have counselled my habit of non-interference are still in force; and I do not apprehend that there will be any occasion for my abandoning it. To do so would be inconsistent with my present Office at the County Asylum, and would be personally inconvenient to me. I therefore retire to my special duties, urging on Gentlemen, who are equally interested with myself, and more independent, that a numerous body of the class of "educated and respectable life," which is unable to help itself, calls for their assistance.

WILLIAM LEY,

Superintendent of the Asylum for the Counties of
Oxford and Berks.

Littlemore, September 17th, 1856.

THE OFFICERS OF THE WARNEFORD ASYLUM.

PRESIDENT,—

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ABINGDON.

Late Chairman, and a Trustee of the Warneford Grants,—

THE REV. VAUGHAN THOMAS.

CHAIRMAN,—

THE REV. DR. BULL, Canon of Christ Church.

PHYSICIAN,—

JAMES ADEY OGLE Esq., M. D.

RESIDENT SUPERINTENDENT,—

THOMAS ALLEN, Esq., Surgeon.

TREASURERS,—

MESSRS. PARSONS & Co., Old Bank, Oxford.